



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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June 17, 2014
FB14-043

Commercial Harvest of Blueline Tilefish in South Atlantic Waters Will Close on June 23, 2014

Commercial harvest of blueline tilefish in South Atlantic waters will **close at 12:01 a.m. (local time) June 23, 2014**. On April 17, 2014, NOAA Fisheries published an emergency rule which removed blueline tilefish from the deep-water grouper complex and established a separate commercial annual catch limit (112,207 pounds whole weight) for blueline tilefish. Landing reports indicate the catch limit will be met by June 23, 2014. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2015.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and who is landing blueline tilefish for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such blueline tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, June 23, 2014. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of blueline tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time) June 23, 2014, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Harvest or possession of blueline tilefish in or from federal waters is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits.
- Sale and purchase of blueline tilefish in or from federal waters is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for a person onboard a vessel with a federal snapper-grouper permit.

This closure is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.